



Institutional policies

Project Quality Policy

Innovation, Impact & Information Division
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Contents

- Preamble.....3**
- 1. Scope of this policy3**
- 2. Principles of this policy4**
 - 2.1 Fundamental principles 4
 - 2.2 The project quality framework 5
- 3. Processes related to this policy9**
 - 3.1 Application in the project cycle 9
 - 3.2 Key commitments 11
- 4. Roles and responsibilities..... 11**
 - 4.1 Concerning the implementation of this policy 11
 - 4.2 Concerning the monitoring and evaluation of this policy..... 12

Preamble

This document determines the project quality policy of Humanity & Inclusion (HI). This policy cancels, simplifies and replaces the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) Policy established in 2015. It provides a common framework and reference for all those directly or indirectly involved in the management of social mission projects, and therefore does not constitute an overall HI quality policy.

HI's project quality policy aims to put the organisation on a path of continuous improvement, learning and accountability, in line with its ethical principles and values.

While remaining consistent with international frameworks such as the OECD's Humanitarian and Development Assistance Evaluation Criteria¹ and the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)², the policy determines:

- **3 fundamental principles** that form the basis of this policy,
- **A quality reference framework**, composed of 7 criteria illustrated by 21 key words, which defines what HI considers to be a quality project,
- **A project cycle** comprising 5 phases and 4 cross-cutting elements,
- **6 key commitments** to monitor the application of this policy in terms of project management processes.

1. Scope of this policy

In line with international thinking and approaches, HI defines quality as all the elements and characteristics of its action that support its ability to meet the explicit or implicit needs and expectations of the people it aims to support in a timely manner, while respecting their dignity.

The quality policy for projects has three components:

- **The quality of the response** to the identified needs, which questions the contribution of HI to positive changes benefiting the populations.
- **The quality of the processes** of project management, which cover realisation, support, steering and measurement, and contribute to the smooth and consistent implementation of the various activities.
- **The technical quality** of the approaches implemented, which applies mainly to the project's products and/or services, with reference to the standards and norms specific to each field or sector of activity.

This project quality policy applies to all social mission projects, regardless of context, geographical area, sectors or intervention modalities.

¹ OCDE. [Better Criteria for Better Evaluation Revised Evaluation Criteria: Definitions and Principles for use](#), 2019

² Core Humanitarian Standard. [Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability](#), 2014

A project is defined as "a series of activities aimed at bringing about clearly specified objectives within a defined time-period and with a defined budget"³.

For more details on the project concept at HI:

→ See [complement 1: The concept of project for HI](#)

2. Principles of this policy

2.1 Fundamental principles

Ethics, Learning and Accountability are the three fundamental principles of HI's project quality policy.

Ethics

The notion of ethics brings together all the universal moral principles and values promoted by HI. HI's action is guided by four values: Humanity, Inclusion, Commitment and Integrity and is based on the relevant provisions of international texts, declarations, conventions and treaties and other commitments related to our activities.

→ See [HI's Charter of Values and Principles & Scope of Action](#)

In the implementation of projects, teams must therefore behave in a respectful, humble and fair manner towards all people, ensuring that the actions undertaken are socially acceptable and do not harm people, communities and the environment.

For more details:

→ See [HI's safeguarding Framework](#)

→ See [HI's child protection policy](#)

→ See [HI's disability, gender and age policy](#)

→ See [HI's protection of beneficiaries from sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment policy](#)

→ See [HI's anti-fraud and anti-corruption policy](#)

→ See [HI's environmental agenda](#)

Learning

HI aims to be a learning organisation, by encouraging mutual learning between HI teams, with its partners, and between the field and headquarters. This learning process allows HI to develop its intervention methodologies and to remain as close as possible to the needs, expectations and choices of the populations.

³ European Commission - [Project Cycle Management Guidelines](#), March 2004

The learning and knowledge management process is central to the continuous improvement of the organisation's actions and should be an integral part of project cycle management, regardless of the length of the project.

The learning principle of this policy is thus intended to contribute to the continuous improvement of interventions, by promoting the creation and sharing of knowledge, feedback and dissemination of results and lessons learned from our projects.

Accountability

Within HI, this notion of accountability corresponds to the capacity to report, in a transparent, clear and intelligible way, to the stakeholders (communities and populations, local and international partners, donors supporting its projects) thanks to known, responsible and reciprocal mechanisms of feedback, analysis and information sharing. It aims to show that actions are carried out according to agreed procedures in order to achieve the objectives set, and to explain any deviations or changes.

2.2 The project quality framework

The project quality framework defines what a quality project is for HI.

It is structured around **7 quality criteria**: Change, Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Compliance, Accountability to populations, Partnership.

For each criterion, a definition is provided and specified by **3 key words**.

For ease of reading, these criteria are grouped around the three categories to which they relate: "Benefits", "Management" and "Stakeholders".

BENEFITS

The "Benefits" category focuses on the changes brought about by the project in the short, medium and/or long term, and on the relevance of the project to the needs of the target groups and their satisfaction.

Changes: The project aims at positive short, medium and/or long term changes for the targeted populations.

Effects: The project contributes to the achievement of positive and measurable changes for the targeted actors, and puts in place measures to mitigate any potential negative effects.

Continuity: The scenario of continuity beyond the project is anticipated, planned and formulated.

Empowerment: The project aims to strengthen actors, reduce the vulnerability of target populations, and improve services to contribute to their empowerment.

Relevance: The project meets the identified needs and is adapted to the context of intervention.

Needs: The project responds to the demands and needs of the population, contributes to the priorities of other stakeholders (authorities, partners, donors, etc.) and is consistent with other ongoing interventions in the area in order to ensure a comprehensive response to the multiple and evolving needs of the target groups.

Context: The project adapts its action according to the context of intervention (socio-cultural and historical determinants, security, logistical constraints, regulatory framework, environment...) and takes into account its evolution.

Lessons learned: The project learns from experience throughout the project cycle to continuously improve the intervention.

MANAGEMENT

The "Management" category specifies the requirements in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and compliance. This sets out the characteristics of optimal project management.

Effectiveness: The objectives of the project are achieved.

Results: The activities contribute to the achievement of the project's objectives, based on results-based management.

Adjustment: A system for regular monitoring of project activities and results is in place, leading to adjustments if necessary.

Technicality: The project achievements meet the required quality, in line with HI and/or international technical standards.

Efficiency: Resources (human, financial, logistical, technical, etc.) are converted into results in an economical way.

Skills: The project team provides the skills needed to implement the project, and roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.

Optimisation: The project has the necessary resources for implementation and manages them in an optimal way.

Responsiveness: The project is deployed in a timely manner and is able to adapt to changes in the context, humanitarian needs and identified risks.

Compliance: The project has the capacity to be accountable to all stakeholders.

Communication: Project information (results, performance, processes) is collected, processed, analysed and shared with stakeholders in a targeted and appropriate manner throughout the project cycle.

Regulations: The project respects international law, the laws of the country of intervention, the obligations of the donor(s) involved, as well as HI's internal rules, standards and commitments.

Documentation: Project documents, data and evidence are stored, filed and accessible in accordance with internal data protection frameworks.

STAKEHOLDERS

Referring to the project environment, the category "Stakeholders" recalls the essential notions of accountability to populations and cooperation with operational partners.

Accountability to populations: The project has put in place mechanisms to involve the populations.

Participation: People are involved in the decision-making processes that affect them throughout the project cycle.

Expression: People have access to spaces or means of expression (satisfaction measurement, feedback mechanisms, etc.).

Information: The population is aware of HI's mandate and values, understands the objectives of the intervention, and is informed of the progress of activities and results throughout the project.

Partnership: Operational partners are involved in each phase of the project cycle.

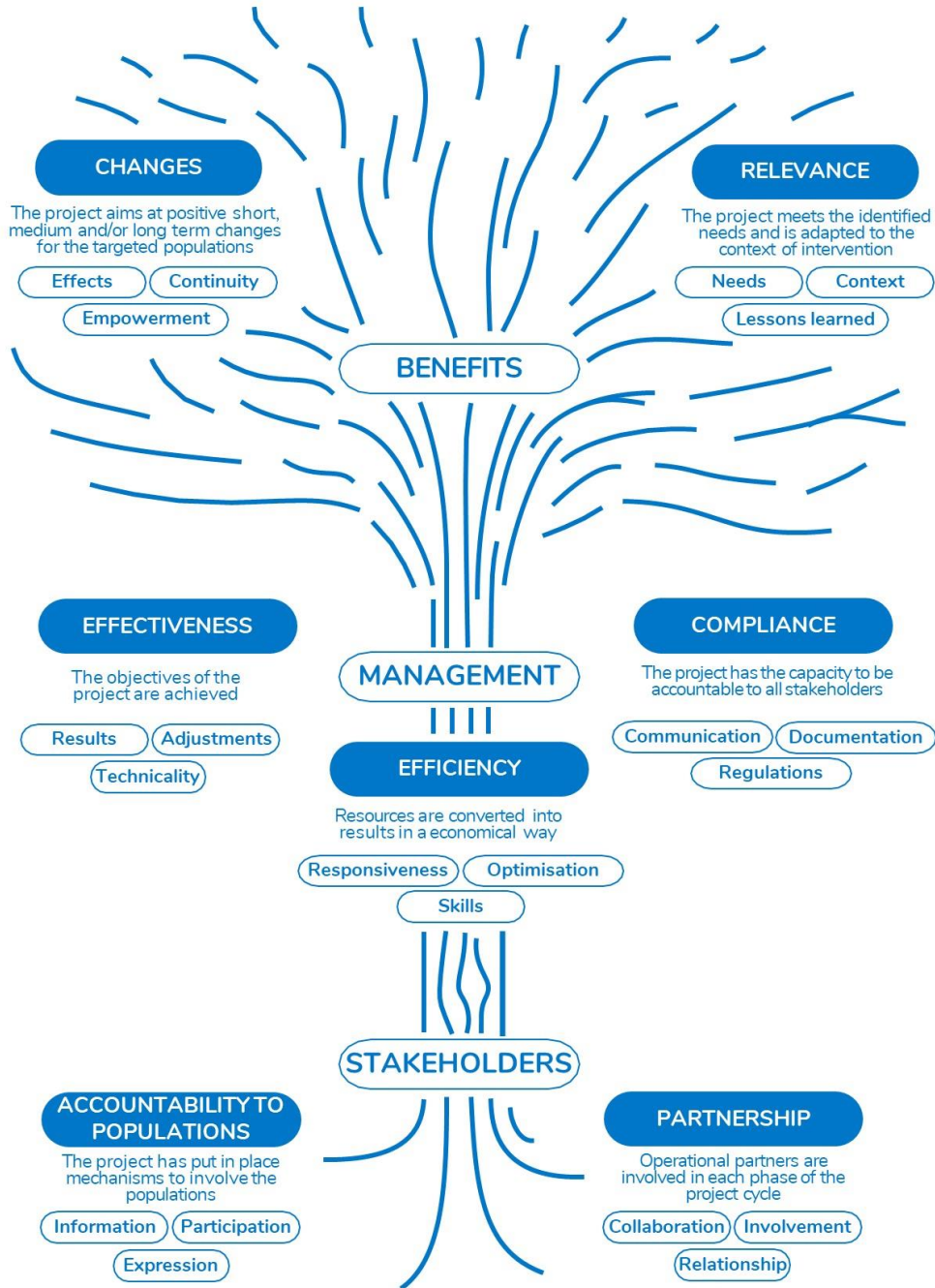
Collaboration: The project develops thoughtful, relevant and effective operational partnerships in a collaborative manner.

Involvement: Partners are regularly informed and actively involved in reasoned and transparent decision-making processes regarding the direction, implementation, achievement of objectives and success of the project.

Relationship: The relationship between the project partners is reciprocal, dynamic and controlled.

A [poster](#) gives a synthetic view of the 7 criteria, the 21 key words and the 3 fundamental principles.

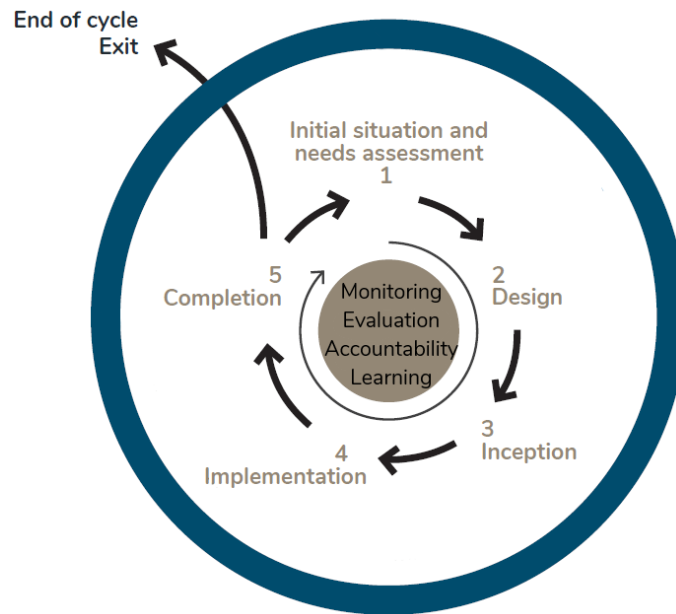
PROJECT QUALITY FRAMEWORK



ETHICS - LEARNING - ACCOUNTABILITY

3. Processes related to this policy

3.1 Application in the project cycle



This diagram represents HI's vision of the project cycle: a cycle made up of **five phases** and **four cross-cutting components**, respecting the strategic and operational frameworks as well as the technical approaches and frameworks defined by the organisation or internationally recognised.

The **initial assessment phase** allows us to identify and understand the needs of a given population through a detailed analysis of the situation. It allows to highlight potential solutions to the problems analysed and to determine whether they are in line with HI's mandate and expertise.

The **project design phase** takes place after the decision to develop a project has been taken. A proposal for a suitable response and usually a funding application are then developed. It ends once the project is accepted and funded.

The **inception phase** provides a foundation and a favourable environment for the implementation of the project. It is a crucial phase for communicating about the project, mobilising resources and planning the details of the intervention. In particular, it should be used to plan all project-related activities in a collegial manner between all teams involved.

The **implementation phase** is the phase of carrying out activities, managing human, financial and logistical resources in an efficient way in order to produce the expected results and achieve the project objectives.

The **completion phase** takes place at the end of the activities and allows to ascertain and communicate the level of achievement of the objectives, and to ensure the closure of any contractual file relating to its implementation.

The elements of **monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning** (MEAL), understood here in terms of processes, are cross-cutting and are therefore present in all these phases.

A|Z Terminology

Monitoring is defined as "a continuous process of systematically collecting information, according to selected indicators, to provide managers and stakeholders with evidence of progress, achievement of objectives and use of allocated funds"⁴.

Evaluation is a process of "systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results"⁵, including the sharing of results and the implementation of corrective measures. The aim is to assess the quality of the project, based on previously defined quality criteria. An evaluation should provide reliable and useful information for incorporating lessons learned into future decision-making and programming processes.

Accountability to populations is a process that involves the ethical and responsible use of power and resources. In practical terms, it means that people have a say in the decisions that affect their lives, receive the information they need to make informed decisions, have access to safe and responsive complaints and feedback mechanisms, and receive equitable assistance according to their needs, priorities and preferences.⁶

Learning is the set of processes aimed at learning lessons that will be used for continuous improvement of project interventions and programme and/or organisational management. These processes include information gathering, analysis, and knowledge creation and sharing.

⁴ OECD. [Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results-based Management](#), 2010

⁵ European Community. [Methodological Basis for Assessment](#), 2006

⁶ UNICEF. [Accountability to Affected Populations](#), 2020

3.2 Key commitments

These commitments must be respected by all those involved in project management, in order to ensure the minimum level of obligation required by the organisation in terms of process quality. They allow for overall monitoring of the implementation of this policy, and are complemented by deployment support tools for policy application at the operational level.

1. Every project must define at least **one outcome indicator** in its logical framework and measure it, allowing the monitoring of the changes expected by the intervention.
2. Every project should have an inclusive **inception phase** with project stakeholders, allowing for detailed planning of the implementation of activities, resource mobilisation and monitoring and evaluation of the project.
3. All projects must carry out a regular (minimum every 4 months) **interservices project review** (project/support) to analyse the latest project information, identify any areas of concern and decide on any necessary changes.
4. Any project evaluation must be **based on the criteria of the HI quality framework**.
5. Every project must formalise and share the **lessons learned** in order to consider them in further interventions, but also to contribute to the overall learning dynamic of HI.
6. All projects should implement **complaints and feedback mechanisms** adapted to their areas of intervention as part of the system set up by the programme.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Concerning the implementation of this policy

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the Operations Managers and, by delegation, the Project Managers, or, when the Project Manager is not yet present (in the diagnosis and design phase in particular), of the person designated to be responsible for these phases. The members of the MEAL team are resource persons and key relays for the Policy. All other actors directly or indirectly involved in project management (shared services, technical specialists, institutional funding team etc.) must also refer to this framework, respect it and support its implementation.

Thus, the project quality policy is designed as a framework and a common reference for all those involved in the management of HI projects.

4.2 Concerning the monitoring and evaluation of this policy

The monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the policy is the responsibility of the Impact, Innovation and Information Division (3I), which relies on the Geographical and Technical Divisions to conduct the exercise.

For any question related to this institutional policy: Pierre Gallien (p.gallien@hi.org)

Approved on December 1st, 2022 by HI's Directorate



Project Quality Policy

This document sets out the quality policy for Humanity & Inclusion (HI) projects, regardless of the context, geographical area, sectors and methods of intervention.

Like the organisation's other institutional policies, it is mandatory and must be respected by the teams. This policy therefore impacts and commits HI as a whole, particularly in relation to the outside world.

Humanity & Inclusion
138, avenue des Frères Lumière
69371 Lyon cedex 08
France
publications@hi.org

